

Remote meeting
**Minutes of a meeting of
Council
on Monday 22 March 2021**



Council members present:

Councillor Lygo (Lord Mayor)	Councillor Goddard (Deputy Lord Mayor)
Councillor Wolff (Sheriff)	Councillor Altaf-Khan
Councillor Arshad	Councillor Azad
Councillor Aziz	Councillor Bely-Summers
Councillor Brown	Councillor Chapman
Councillor Clarkson	Councillor Cook
Councillor Corais	Councillor Curran
Councillor Fry	Councillor Gant
Councillor Garden	Councillor Gotch
Councillor Haines	Councillor Hayes
Councillor Henwood	Councillor Hollingsworth
Councillor Howlett	Councillor Humberstone
Councillor Kennedy	Councillor Landell Mills
Councillor Malik	Councillor Munkonge
Councillor Pressel	Councillor Rowley
Councillor Simmons	Councillor Linda Smith
Councillor Roz Smith	Councillor Tanner
Councillor Tarver	Councillor Taylor
Councillor Tidball	Councillor Turner
Councillor Upton	Councillor Wade

Apologies:

Councillors Djafari-Marbini, Lloyd-Shogbesan, McManners and Simm sent apologies.

The minutes show when Councillors who were absent for part of the meeting arrived and left.

89. Declarations of interest

Minute 94 – Cllr Altaf Khan declared that this affected a property listed as his declared disclosable pecuniary interest and he would leave the meeting and take no part in the debate on this item.

Minute 95 – Variation of Hackney Carriage Tariffs - Cllr Malik declared that this affected his declared disclosable pecuniary interest and he would leave the remote meeting and take no part in the debate on this item.

90. Minutes

Council agreed to approve the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 25 January 2021 and of the budget meeting held on 17 February 2021 as true and correct records.

91. Appointment to Committees

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Brown, announced and Council noted changes with immediate effect:

- Planning Review Committee - Cllr Pressel to take the seat allocated to the Labour Group;
- Standards Committee – Cllr Tanner to take the seat allocated to the Labour Group; both replacing Cllr Azad following her becoming an independent non-group councillor.

92. Announcements

The Lord Mayor welcomed Caroline Green to her first meeting as Chief Executive.

He thanked councillors who would not be standing in the May 6th elections for their commitment to the Council and wished all those standing for re-election good luck.

He noted that 23 March, the anniversary of the UK's first Covid lockdown, was a national day of reflection to remember those who had died of Covid in the past year. As well as remembering those lost, he paid tribute to all those who had volunteered to help their communities during the pandemic.

He had taken part in online events and meetings including for Holocaust Memorial Day; meetings with the High Sheriff and Lord Lieutenant; online annual European Reception to welcome Oxford residents from other European countries; and with and in support of the Lord Mayor's charities.

He reminded councillors to join in his *Move with Mayor Mark* campaign

At the Lord Mayor's invite, the City Rector, Rev Anthony Buckley said the national day of reflection was an opportunity to remember those who had lost loved ones and were suffering ill health, and thanked council staff for their work and commitment that this year brought to the fore.

The Sheriff and Deputy Lord Mayor had nothing further to report.

The Leader of the Council Cllr Brown, said that the city flag would fly at half mast on 23 March for national day of reflection, and thanked staff and councillors for their work during the pandemic in the past year.

The Chief Executive outlined for Council the constraints on service and resourcing pressures on the council and its workforce including the extra demands on council services and additional requirements as a result of the pandemic, and the long term economic and health impacts increasing pressure on services and finances.

93. Public addresses and questions that relate to matters for decision at this meeting

There were no addresses or questions.

94. Additional HMO licensing scheme renewal

Cllr Altaf Khan, having declared this item related to his disclosable pecuniary interest, left the online meeting for the duration of this item and returned to the meeting at the start of the next item.

Council considered the report of the Head of Regulatory Services and Community Safety submitted a report to Cabinet on 10 March which provided the results from the consultation exercise carried out for the proposal to renew the HMO Licensing Scheme and sought approval from members to designate the whole of the City as subject to additional licensing under section 56(1)(a) of the Housing Act 2004 in relation to the size and type of HMO specified in the recommendations of the report for 5 years commencing on 10 June 2021.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery, Cllr Hollingsworth, introduced the report, proposed the recommendations and answered questions.

The recommendations were agreed on being seconded and put to the vote.

Council resolved to adopt the proposed fees and charges structure for both mandatory and additional HMO licences attached at Appendix 6 of the report.

95. Variation (increase) of the current Hackney Carriage Tariffs (table of fares)

Cllr Malik, having declared this item related to his disclosable pecuniary interest, left the virtual meeting for the duration of this item and returned to the meeting at the start of the next item.

Council considered the report of the Head of Regulatory Services and Community Safety to the General Purposes Licensing Committee on 22 September 2020 asking for approval of a variation of the current Hackney Carriage Table of Fares from the City of Oxford Licensed Taxicab Association (COLTA), set out at Appendix 5 of that report.

The Chair of the General Purposes Licensing Committee, Cllr Clarkson, introduced the report, proposed the recommendations and answered questions. The recommendations were agreed on being seconded and put to the vote.

Council resolved to

- **approve** the application from COLTA to vary the Hackney Carriage Table of Fares and
- **approve** the changes to the table of fees as proposed by COLTA and as set out in Appendix 5 of the committee report.

96. Pay Policy Statement 2021

Council considered the report of the Head of Business Improvement setting out the Annual Pay Policy Statement.

The Cabinet Member for Customer Focused Services, Cllr Chapman, introduced the report, proposed the recommendations and answered questions.

Council resolved to approve the Annual Pay Policy Statement 2020/21 as attached at Appendix 1 of the report.

97. Questions on Cabinet minutes

a) Minutes of meeting Wednesday 10 February 2021 of Cabinet

Minute 144 - Zero Carbon Council by 2030

Cllr Wolff asked for clarification of the carbon emissions goals and targets: were these a reduction of 10% per year or to zero carbon by 2030

Cllr Hayes clarified that the reduction was 10% of the current baseline each year to achieve zero carbon by 2030, also supplemented by external funding, and more detailed calculations were set out in the report.

Minute 145 - Programme approval and allocation for Public Sector Decarbonisation Funding

Cllr Simmons welcomed the successful bid and asked if investment in a solar farm qualified for this funding or if it failed to meet the eligibility criteria due to the payback period.

Cllr Hayes replied that there was an exception to the normal 10-year payback period for solar farms.

Minute 146 – Housing management system

Cllr Wade asked about cost recovery from the contractor and in ‘lessons learned’ what these were and would they

Cllr Rowley replied that more details on these were in the confidential appendix to the report.

b) Minutes of meeting Wednesday 10 March 2021 of Cabinet (to follow)

Minute 158 – Scrutiny Committee reports

Cllr Gant said that in his view the responsibility for representing the views of the Scrutiny Committee rested with the Chair of the Committee and not with Cabinet members observing the Scrutiny meeting. He asked if the Cabinet Member agreed.

Cllr Hollingsworth confirmed that the Cabinet minutes were a correct record, and he had intended no criticism of the Chair, committee or the report: he had reporting his own views and corrected an inadvertent factual error in the committee's report.

Cllr Simmons said he considered there was a misalignment between the aspirations for zero carbon in the Council's business plan the priority 4 in the Local Plan targets and this merited further discussion.

Minute 164 – Zero Emission Zone

Cllr Gant asked about the enforcement for the ZEZ area and regime and what cameras would be used.

Cllr Roz Smith asked how blue badge holders applied for exemptions from charges for driving within the ZEZ to allow them to park in disabled bays close to shops.

Cllr Hayes said he could provide written answers to both questions.

98. Questions on Notice from Members of Council

31 written questions were asked of the Cabinet Members and the Leader, and these and written responses were published before the meeting.

These along with summaries of the 13 supplementary questions and responses asked and given at the meeting are set out in the minutes pack.

The meeting broke for 20min during this item, and Cllrs Haines and Malik left at that point.

99. Public addresses and questions that do not relate to matters for decision at this Council meeting

Council heard 4 addresses and Cabinet Members read or summarised their written responses (set out in full in the minutes pack)

1. An address by Kaddy Beck – The 'Save Bertie' Campaign
2. An address by Oliver de Soissons – Oxford National Park (supporting Motion d on the agenda)
3. An address by Micaela Tuckwell – Representing 'Save The Sheaf' campaign organisers
4. An address by Fiona Steel – Representing: Good Food Oxford on developing a Food Strategy (supporting Motions a and h on the agenda)

100. Partnership report - Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Partnership

Council considered the report on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Customer Focused Services, Cllr Chapman, on the Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Partnership.

Cllr Chapman introduced the report, noting that the partnership would meet on 12 April 2021. In answer to questions he noted:

The impact of the proposed Environment Bill and regulatory framework would be clearer once the Bill and timetable were published. There was currently a complex credit system for waste and recycling and the County Council were keen to make savings, so this council to be vigilant to ensure it was not penalised for excellent recycling rates.

He accepted the importance of the circular economy (noted in the report, but lacking action points) and would raise this with the partnership.

Recycling rates were at a record level for the city and the increased rates were excellent. Comparing a city with a large student and transient population to other Oxfordshire districts, largely rural with small towns, was not comparing like with like.

Council noted the report.

101. Scrutiny Committee update report

Council had before it the report of the Scrutiny Committee Chair, Cllr Gant, who introduced this.

Council noted the report.

102. Motions on notice 22 March 2021

Council had before it 8 motions on notice submitted in accordance with Council procedure rules and reached decisions as set out below.

Motions agreed as set out below:

- a) Developing a Food Strategy (proposed by Cllr Simmons, seconded by Cllr Wolff; Cllr Simmons accepted the amendment proposed by Cllr Tidball and Cllr Hayes)
- b) Housing and Homelessness (proposed by Cllr Hollingsworth, seconded by Cllr Djafari-Marbini)
- c) Call on the Government to repeal the Vagrancy Act (proposed by Cllr Gant, seconded by Cllr Wade)
- d) Support for a new Oxford National Park (proposed by Cllr Wolff, seconded by Cllr Simmons; Cllr Wolff accepted the amendment proposed by Cllr Hayes and Cllr Tarver)

Motions not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished:

- e) Financial security (proposed by Cllr Hayes, seconded by Cllr Humberstone)
- f) Proportional Representation to ensure every vote counts (proposed by Cllr Garden)
- g) Adopting an advertising and sponsorship policy which supports responsible consumption (proposed by Cllr Simmons, seconded by Cllr Wolff)
- h) Against Food Poverty (proposed by Cllr Tidball)

a) Developing a Food Strategy

Cllr Simmons, proposed the submitted motion as set out in the agenda and briefing note. He confirmed that he and the original seconder (Cllr Wolff) accepted the amendment proposed by Cllr Tidball and Cllr Hayes as set out in the briefing note.

Cllr Tidball then seconded the amended motion.

After debate and on being put to the vote the amended motion was agreed.

Council resolved to adopt the following motion:

Council recognises the commitment made to ensuring nobody in Oxford went hungry. Knowing that the pandemic would exacerbate inequalities, this Council established five Locality Response Hubs, a food depot at Rose Hill Community Centre, and, with partners the Oxford Hub, Oxford Together.

Council further recognises that this Council:

- Gave over 11,000 emergency food parcels to communities between March and August 2020; working with communities and Oxford Brookes University, these food parcels were nutritious and culturally appropriate.
- Worked to strengthen relationships with SOFEA and a network of charities and community partners, such as Oxford Mutual Aid, Oxford Community Action, Good Food Oxford, the Oxford Mosques and Syrcox, to support Oxford's food system.
- Secured food pipelines, along with access to Community Larders and low-cost food for those who needed it, and £145k of grant funding to support organisations to sustain this system when the Council transitioned from food parcel delivery. Took care to call all those in receipt of a food parcel and worked with them to access food vouchers and the network of food banks and larders.
- Committed to providing Free School Meal vouchers when the Government refused to provide Free School Meals during October half-term, and continued to work with partners to help people access food through the Winter Support Grants.

More can be done. Supermarkets have significant food waste. Tackling food poverty and reducing waste to deliver a net Zero Carbon City go hand in hand.

This Council backs concerted and coordinated action to address food poverty and resolves to continue to work with partners, as we have throughout the pandemic, to develop a county-wide strategy that addresses the causes of food poverty as part of our wider anti-poverty work. This should include the following:

- The Head of Community Services bringing a report to Cabinet with proposals for commissioning a Food Strategy to address the causes of food inequality in Oxford, exacerbated by the pandemic taking into account:
 - The National Food Strategy;
 - The considerable work undertaken by this Council to address inequality and to tackle food poverty during the pandemic;
 - Being a signatory to the Oxford Good Food Charter;
 - The excellent work of Oxford's voluntary sector to tackle food poverty;
 - Recommendations on achieving a self-sustaining community food system and Council's role in supporting this.

- Bringing together the views and knowledge of our food network partners to better understand the current root causes of food poverty, and a shared action plan to implement meaningful solutions.
- Tackling child food poverty by campaigning to address holiday hunger, increasing take up of free school meals and access to food larders for families with children.
- Continuing to use relationships with supermarkets to divert surplus food to those in need and minimise waste to help eliminate Oxford's contribution to climate change by 2040 or sooner, in line with the Zero Carbon Oxford Charter and recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change.

b) Housing and Homelessness

Cllr Hollingsworth, seconded by Cllr Aziz proposed the submitted motion as set out in the agenda and briefing note.

After debate and on being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

Council resolved to adopt the following motion:

This Council notes with horror the decision by the Government to make sleeping rough sufficient grounds for deportation from the UK; nothing could expose the callous brutality of the current Conservative administration more clearly than this.

The Council also notes that in addition to long-standing and indisputable evidence linking both homelessness and poor quality housing with poor mental and physical health, poorer educational outcomes and worse life chances, it is becoming clearer that overcrowded homes are likely to be a significant factor in both the spread of Covid and deaths from the virus.

This Council notes that overcrowding is just one factor that has been identified as leading to the higher rates of people from BAME backgrounds becoming critically ill and dying from Covid-19 and the work Shelter and The Big Issue have done to highlight the government's own figures that black people are 'three times as likely to experience homelessness'. The pandemic is intensifying the housing crisis and widening inequalities for these groups.

The pandemic has demonstrated that we are only as safe as our most vulnerable member; those with no recourse to public funds must have access to public services including housing services with no fear of deportation.

The Council further notes that the 'everyone in' campaign at the onset of lockdown showed that it is possible to end rough sleeping with sufficient political will and funding, and also notes that over the last 70 years it is only when council housing was being built in sufficient volumes alongside market housing that enough homes for everyone were provided.

This Council believes that nobody should have to sleep rough on our streets, and that having a secure, safe and affordable home is a basic human right for all.

This Council believes that the Government should have used the publication of the long-delayed Social Housing White Paper to address properly both the moral imperative to end rough sleeping, and the equally important need to provide genuinely affordable and secure homes for all, and condemns the failure to do so.

This Council therefore asks that:

- the Leader of the Council writes to the Home Secretary to demand that Government abandons their proposals to make sleeping rough a ground for deportation, and instead to properly fund local authorities, health services and support providers to ensure that no one in Oxford, or anywhere else in the UK, has to sleep rough on the streets;
- all members of Council support Shelter's campaign for a mass programme of social housing building, with 200,000 new homes a year being required to address a backlog that has built up over decades;
- all members of Council endorse efforts by Oxford City Council and the other local authorities in Oxfordshire to provide enough affordable housing to meet the needs of our current and future citizens.

c) Call on the Government to repeal the Vagrancy Act

Cllr Gant, seconded by Cllr Garden, proposed the submitted motion as set out in the agenda and briefing note.

After debate and on being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

Council resolved to adopt the following motion:

On 21 June 1824 Parliament introduced "An Act for the punishment of idle and disorderly persons, rogues and vagabonds", commonly known as the Vagrancy Act. It was a response to the increasing number of homeless urban poor following the end of the Napoleonic Wars some nine years earlier, and made it an offence to sleep rough or beg. Campaigners including William Wilberforce condemned the Act from the start because it did not take individual circumstances into account.

But, astonishingly, almost two centuries later, it remains in force. Nor is it just a forgotten relic: in 1989 there were 1,396 convictions under the Act; in 2014 three men were prosecuted under the Act for taking cheese, tomatoes and cake from a bin outside a supermarket in Kentish Town (later dropped by the CPS).

In 2017 the Government announced a review of the law, but made no progress.

In March 2020 Layla Moran MP tabled the Vagrancy (Repeal) Bill. The campaign was joined by many leading organisations in the field, including Shelter, St Mungo's, Crisis, and very many others. However, the Government took no steps to progress the bill.

On 25 February this year the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government Robert Jenrick MP told the House of Commons that the Vagrancy Act should be "consigned to history" and described it as "antiquated" (though did add, worryingly, "We should consider carefully whether better, more modern legislation could be introduced to preserve some aspects of it").

Layla Moran MP welcomed the direction of his comments and pointed out cross-party support for the repeal Bill: "Liberal Democrats and politicians on all sides have been urging him to repeal this law for years and years. So now he has to keep his word and scrap the Act as soon as possible. Our cross-party bill can be adopted at a moment's notice and would receive widespread support."

This Council

- Welcomes the apparent commitment of Robert Jenrick MP to consign the Vagrancy Act to history, and joins the cross-party group of MPs in urging him to expedite the Repeal Bill as soon as possible;
- Re-states its belief that criminalising homelessness is never part of the solution to a complex problem;
- Commits to improving the supply of social-rented homes through house purchase or renovation of underused/unused properties, and to pursue additional funding from MHCLG;
- Explores by way of a report to Cabinet from the Interim Director of Housing the setting up or supporting a Social Enterprise Lettings Agency to link landlords with homeless people, and provide ongoing support to both landlords and tenants;
- Asks the Leader to write to Layla Moran MP as sponsor of the Vagrancy (Repeal) Bill communicating its wholehearted support for the Bill and its speedy passage through Parliament.

d) Support for a new Oxford National Park

Cllr Wolff, seconded by Cllr Simmons proposed the submitted motion as set out in the agenda and briefing note.

Cllr Wolff accepted the amendment proposed by Cllr Hayes as set out in the briefing note.

After debate and on being put to the vote the amended motion was agreed.

Council resolved to adopt the following motion:

Oxford City Council has committed to increasing biodiversity and is supporting calls to double tree cover across the county, including developing Oxfordshire's first Local Nature Partnership in partnerships with others.

Oxford City Council takes an ambitious Natural Resource Management approach which will outline what we need to do to sustainably enhance biodiversity. It is important that we examine the needs of our varied ecosystems and maintain vitally important habitats and species in our city.

In the recommendations from the [Oxford Citizens Assembly on Climate Change](#), the first by a UK city, enhanced biodiversity was addressed as one of five themes and seen as central to the overall net zero vision of Oxford. It was recognised that tackling climate change and ecological breakdown together was important. Assembly Members were positive about creating more biodiversity and green space. The strong sentiment emerging from citizens was to make our communities among the greenest in the country, which is exciting ambitious and achievable.

The City Council owns and manages over 600 hectares of accessible green space in the city and surrounding area, including a country park, 33 nature areas and over 60 urban parks. The City has 12 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, covering 278 hectares

and including Port Meadow (which has been meadowland for at least 4000 years), Wolvercote Common, Shotover Country Park, and Lye Valley Nature Reserve.

Council notes that Bioabundance, a local community interest company, has put together a plan for a 36sq mile National Park to the northeast of Oxford in response to a call from the Government, in its Environmental Bill and in its 10-point plan; the Green Industrial Revolution, for the creation of new National Parks.

Bioabundance's asking local authorities, the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, businesses, charities and environment groups to work together to make this happen for Oxfordshire.

Bioabundance say that the nature recovery zone would halt the catastrophic loss of wildlife and reduce the detrimental effect of large new developments around Oxford. The right kind of trees would be planted to promote carbon capture and natural flood defences.

Bioabundance say that the proposed Park encompasses Otmoor and the ancient royal forests of Bernwood and Stowood. This is a beautiful area with few major roads, between Oxford, Bicester, Kidlington and Wheatley. Over a quarter of a million people live within 10 miles of this area. Easy access would be offered through a new network of sustainable transport links, including foot and cycle paths from train stations and from Park and Ride.

Council asks the Leader to consider a statement of support for the new Oxford National Park after more information can be gathered, and to ask the Interim Executive Director (Communities) to bring a paper to Cabinet to reflect on this information and consider how the Council might get involved further and explore the value of extending the proposed Park to include adjoining land (for example, Shotover).

e) Financial Security

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

f) Proportional Representation to ensure every vote counts

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

g) Adopting an advertising and sponsorship policy which supports responsible consumption

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

h) Against Food Poverty

This motion was not taken as the time allocated for debate had finished.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 9.30 pm

Lord Mayor

Date: Monday 26 July 2021

Decisions on items of business take effect immediately: Motions may be implemented immediately or may require further budget provision and/or reports to Cabinet before implementation. Details are in the Council's Constitution.

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